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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/036,982	12/31/2001	William E. Ryan JR.	F-423	5328

919 7590 04/28/2003

PITNEY BOWES INC.
35 WATERVIEW DRIVE
P.O. BOX 3000
MSC 26-22
SHELTON, CT 06484-8000

EXAMINER

RODRIGUEZ, JOSEPH C

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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3653

DATE MAILED: 04/28/2003

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/036,982

Applicant(s)

RYAN ET AL.

Examiner

Joseph C Rodriguez

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☐ Responsive to communication(s) filed on ____.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-15 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) 12-15 is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) ____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-11 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) ____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) ____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☒ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 18 May 2002 is/are: a) ☒ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
- Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
- 11) ☐ The proposed drawing correction filed on ____ is: a) ☐ approved b) ☐ disapproved by the Examiner.
- If approved, corrected drawings are required in reply to this Office action.
- 12) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 119 and 120

- 13) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
- ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 - ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. ____.
 - ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.
- 14) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) (to a provisional application).
- a) ☐ The translation of the foreign language provisional application has been received.
- 15) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 120 and/or 121.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s) 7,8.
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s) ____.
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) ☐ Other:

DETAILED ACTION

Election/Restrictions

Applicant's election with traverse of group 1 (claims 1-11) in Paper No. 10 is acknowledged. The traversal is on the grounds that no burden is present. This is not found persuasive as there is no burden requirement in a species election.

The requirement is still deemed proper and is therefore made FINAL.

Claims 12-15 are withdrawn from further consideration pursuant to 37 CFR 1.142(b), as being drawn to a nonelected group, there being no allowable generic or linking claim.

Specification

The abstract of the disclosure is objected to for improper language. Correction is required. See MPEP § 608.01(b).

Applicant is reminded of the proper language and format for an abstract of the disclosure.

The abstract should be in narrative form and generally limited to a single paragraph on a separate sheet within the range of 50 to 150 words. It is important that the abstract not exceed 150 words in length since the space provided for the abstract on the computer tape used by the printer is limited. The form and legal phraseology often used in patent claims, such as "means" and "said," should be avoided. The abstract should describe the disclosure sufficiently to assist readers in deciding whether there is a need for consulting the full patent text for details.

The language should be clear and concise and should not repeat information given in the title. It should avoid using phrases which can be implied, such as, "The disclosure concerns," "The disclosure defined by this invention," "The disclosure describes," etc.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

Claims 1-11 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

The claim language "comprising comprising" (claim 1, ln. 2) is nonsensical.

The claim language "for the group" (claim 5, ln. 2) is nonsensical.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(e) the invention was described in (1) an application for patent, published under section 122(b), by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent or (2) a patent granted on an application for patent by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent, except that an international application filed under the treaty defined in section 351(a) shall have the effects for purposes of this subsection of an application filed in the United States only if the international application designated the United States and was published under Article 21(2) of such treaty in the English language.

Claims are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Lopez et al. ("Lopez")(US Pub. No. '099).

Regarding claims 1 and 10, Lopez teaches a system (Fig. 1-4) comprising a component for feeding and singulating (near 70, 90), a detecting module (20), a diverter (Fig. 1, box 110, 116; para. 47), a system for reading and determining (107, 108, 109,

112), and a bin module (Fig. 4, near ends of letters and flats conveyors). Here, the detection area (not illustrated) is regarded as the area containing the requisite modules.

Regarding claim 2, the control system is regarded as inherent in the processing system taught by Lopez (para. 47).

Regarding claims 3-9, Lopez teaches the detection module as claimed by Applicant (Fig. 4, near 20; para. 34, 44, 51). Here, the driven belts can be regarded as guide walls.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claims 1-10 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Lopez et al. ("Lopez")(US Pub. No. '099) in view of what is well known in the art as demonstrated by Lohmann (US '936) and/or Hayduchok et al. ("Hayduchok")(US '889).

Lopez as set forth above teaches all that is claimed except under an alternative interpretation the control system and multiple bin features may not be present. These features, however, are well-known in the sorting arts. For instance, Lohmann teaches the control system for scanning envelopes (col. 2, ln. 33 et seq.). Hayduchok teaches that the scanning and then sorting of letters into multiple bins is a common processing method for postal matter (col. 7, ln. 1 et seq.). Therefore, it would have been obvious at

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the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to modify the invention of Lopez as taught above as these are well known processing features in the mail sorting arts and the mail is likely to require further processing after being screened for contaminants.

Claims 11 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Lopez et al. ("Lopez")(US Pub. No. '099) in view of Call et al. ("Call")(US Pub. No. '664)

Lopez as set forth above teaches all that is claimed except for expressly teaching the bin module clean area wherein air flows to the detection area. Call, however, teaches that it is well known to maintain a clean area with a negative pressure region when screening mail for contaminants as this prevents the contaminants from flowing into the clean area (Abstract). Therefore, it would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to modify the invention of Lopez as taught above.

Conclusion

Any references not explicitly discussed above but made of record are considered relevant to the prosecution of the instant application.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Joseph C Rodriguez whose telephone number is **703-308-8342**. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F during normal business hours (9 am – 6 pm, EST).

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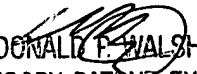
The examiner's **Personal fax number** is **703-706-3678**.

The **Official** fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is **703-306-4195**.

The **UnOfficial** fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is **703-306-4195**.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the **Receptionist** whose telephone number is **703-308-1113**.

April 23, 2003


DONALD F. WALSH
SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER
TECHNOLOGY CENTER 3600